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For Immediate Release:

Cambridge Snow Operations Update Feb. 15, 2015

Cambridge, MA – Feb. 15, 2015 – The Cambridge Snow Emergency Parking Ban remains in effect until public safety officials determine that it is safe to lift the ban.

City offices, including Cambridge Public Libraries, will be closed Monday, Feb. 16, in observance of the Presidents' Day holiday. There will be no programs and no trash or recycling pickup on Monday. Pickup routes will be one day behind schedule for the remainder of the week.

According to the National Weather Service, we are in the midst of the snowiest month, and the third snowiest winter, on record for the Boston area. Four major snowstorms, including two blizzards, between January 26 and February 15 have dropped nearly 90 inches of snow in Cambridge.

Cambridge City officials are sending out this special operations update to assure the community that despite the challenging weather conditions we face, the City has devoted the personnel and resources necessary to maintain public safety. We will continue snow clearing efforts into the coming week and beyond.

Overview of City Snow Operations this Winter

Since the first major storm last month, representatives from the City Manager's Office, Department of Public Works (DPW), Fire, Police, Emergency Communications, Traffic and Parking, Water, Electrical, Public Health and Human Services have been coordinating closely on snow operations planning and implementation. Daily team meetings are held to review weather forecasts, streets conditions, traffic and parking concerns, equipment performance, snow hauling operations schedule, and much more. DPW crews have worked nearly continuously for the past several weeks salting, plowing, and hauling snow.

Public Safety Is Our Top Priority

During and after major snow storms, the City's primary priority is to maintain access for emergency vehicles to all roadways. This is accomplished by proactively salting streets, pushing back snow as close to the curb as possible during and after a storm, and applying additional salt as needed. Snow emergency parking bans are a key part of this effort, as they allow us to clear wider expanses along major arteries and heavily trafficked but narrow streets.

The condition of major arteries and secondary streets is continually assessed by numerous City departments, including Police, Fire, and Traffic and Parking. Parking bans along certain streets may be put into effect after the citywide parking ban ends if public safety assessments determine this is necessary. In the days following each major storm, Public Works Engineering staff repeatedly inspect every dead end street to confirm emergency vehicle access.

Public Works plowing and snow removal operations are prioritized based on all of these public safety assessments. Other high priority safety issues the City addresses includes the removal of snow piles that limit visibility and pedestrian access at intersections, starting with intersections along major streets, clearing snow around fire

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hydrants, and snow removal from high volume bus routes and stops. DPW also clears high priority pedestrian routes in squares and along public schools, public buildings, and parks starting during a storm and continuing for days after.

On Saturday, Feb. 14, DPW crews conducted salting and plowing operations for the new storm, utilizing over 150 pieces of equipment. This work continued throughout Sunday and a major snow removal and hauling operation is scheduled to begin the afternoon of Feb. 16.

Pedestrian-focused snow clearing efforts in squares and along City buildings and parks have been in effect, concurrent with plowing operations.

The City has been in contact with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), and has requested additional equipment from MEMA to help with snow removal and hauling efforts. City staff continue to assess the conditions of roadways, and will consider the need to convert two-way streets temporarily to one-way on a case-by-case basis. The City's Inspectional Services Department is actively inspecting potentially hazardous ice on private buildings overhanging the public way.

Looking Ahead This Week

Extremely cold temperatures are expected over the next couple days, and additional snow fall is expected on Tuesday into Wednesday. The City's plowing, hauling and removal will continue on roadways and pedestrian areas well into the coming week. The parking ban remains in effect until public safety officials determine that it is safe to lift the ban.

How Residents Can Help

Cambridge residents have been extremely patient throughout these past few weeks for which we are extremely appreciative. While City crews continue to work tirelessly during all hours of the day, we thought it would be appropriate to share some tips on how the public can assist with snow removal efforts.

Members of the Cambridge community are asked to please:

- Avoid unnecessary driving during and immediately following major snow storms.
- *Drive safe, ride safe, walk safe, and play safe.*
With large snow piles at corners, visibility may be impacted and pedestrian access limited. Drivers should be on the lookout for pedestrians and cyclists, cyclists and pedestrians should remain aware of their surrounding and be highly visible to traffic, and everyone should make sure children do not play on snow piles along the side of the road.
- Park at least 20 feet from the street corners so that plows can push snow away from crosswalks.
- Reach out to neighbors who are elderly, have a disability, or may have difficulty shoveling.
- Help the Fire Department by clearing fire hydrants on your neighborhood streets.
- As snow starts to melt, try to clear street drains to reduce ponding and icy patches.

Residents who have concerns regarding snow removal are asked to contact the Department of Public Works at 617.349.4800. Public Works is currently experiencing a high volume of calls and emails about snow removal city-wide, so we thank you in advance for your patience in awaiting their reply.

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